

The Wisdom of God

1 Corinthians 1:18-31

New Covenant Presbyterian Church
January 29, 2023 10:00am Service



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The Worship of God

January 29, 2023 Fourth Sunday after Epiphany

Welcome and Announcements

Sharing Our Vision

Preparing Ourselves for Worship During the Musical Prelude ...



There's one cross that may cause people to ponder its meaning. It stands outside a church in Old Greenwich, Connecticut, and is made of raw, unpolished steel. When it rains, red, rusty drops roll off of it like blood. On sunny days in winter, rust-red holes dot the snow at its base.

What goes through the minds of those who pass by that weathered symbol? More importantly, what is their response to its message? Is the cross foolishness, nothing more than a fashion trend? Or does it bring to mind the blood Christ willingly shed for our redemption?

Paul said that the "wisdom of this age" cannot grasp the mystery that is God's plan of salvation. It is only through the power of the Holy Spirit that we can understand the "foolishness" of the cross."

Preparing to Meet God

Call to Worship

- L: The heavens are telling the glory of God; and the firmament proclaims his handiwork.
P: ***We gather together to sing our praises to God's glory.***
L: The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul.
P: ***We gather with open hearts to receive the comforting presence of the Lord.***
L: The fear of the Lord is pure, enduring forever.
P: ***The ordinances of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.***
A: ***O God, as we gather in gratitude, may the words of our mouths and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable to you, our rock, and our redeemer. To you we lift our voices in praise this day!***

Hymn # 262

God of the Ages, Whose Almighty Hand

*1-God of the ages, whose almighty hand, leads forth in beauty all the starry band,
Of shining worlds in splendor through the skies, our grateful songs before thy throne arise.*

*2-Thy love divine hath lead us in the past. In this free land by thee our lot is cast.
Be thou our ruler, guardian, guide, and stay: Thy Word our law, thy paths our chosen way.*

*3-From war's alarms, from deadly pestilence, be thy strong arm our ever-sure defense.
Thy true religion in our hearts increase. Thy bounteous goodness nourish us in peace.*

*4-Refresh thy people on their toilsome way. Lead us from night to never ending day.
Fill all our lives with love and grace divine, and glory, laud, and praise be ever thine.*

Prayer of Confession

God of love, you gave us the covenant of the Law to guide us and to help us live with our neighbors in peace and love. And yet, too often, we just don't get it. We look for Christ among the rich, but discover he is more likely to be among the poor. We search for Christ among the powerful, but find him more often among the weak. We seek Christ among the wise, but find him in what the world calls foolish. Forgive us, holy One, and show us where the true Source of Life and Love can be found, that we might faithfully follow your way. And now, holy God, we turn to you in silent prayer to share our concerns and to seek your forgiveness.....Amen.

Assurance of Pardon

L: May the God of the Law guide us in living lives that keep God's covenant of love.

P: **May Christ's forgiveness grant us new life, even when we break God's Law.**

L: May the Holy Spirit of conviction lead us to confession and renewal,

P: **That we would respond in love and thanksgiving to the God of covenant and change.**

Meeting God in the Word

Children's Message/Prayer for Illumination

First Lesson

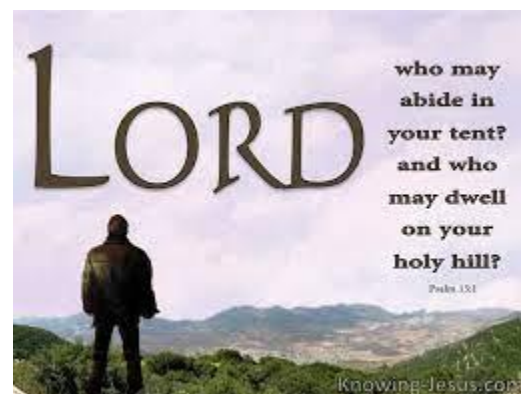
Psalm 15

Who Shall Abide in God's Sanctuary?

Lay Leader

O Lord, who may abide in your tent? Who may dwell on your holy hill? Those who walk blamelessly, and do what is right, and speak the truth from their heart; who do not slander with their tongue, and do no evil to their friends, nor take up a reproach against their neighbors; in whose eyes the wicked are despised, but who honor those who fear the Lord; who stand by their oath even to their hurt; who do not lend money at interest, and do not take a bribe against the innocent.

Those who do these things shall never be moved.



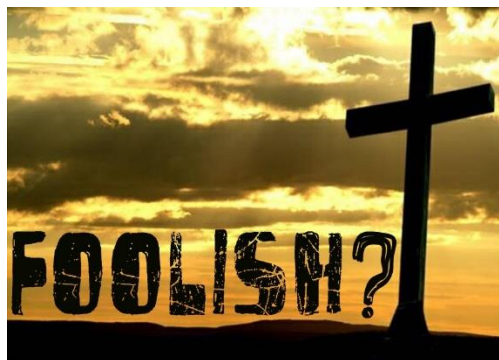
L: This is the Word of the Lord. **P:** **Thanks be to God.**

Second Reading

1 Corinthians 1: 18-31

Christ, the Power and Wisdom of God

Carol



For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written, 'I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.'

Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, God decided, through the foolishness of our proclamation, to save those who believe. For Jews demand signs and Greeks desire wisdom, but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling-block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength.

Consider your own call, brothers and sisters: not many of you were wise by human standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, things that are not, to reduce to nothing things that are, so that no one might boast in the presence of God. He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption, in order that, as it is written, 'Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.'

L: This is the Word of the Lord. **P: Thanks be to God.**

Sermon

The "Why" Behind Preaching Foolishness

Responding to the Word

Hymn # 323

Loving Spirit

(Sung to tune of *The Servant Song*, #727, red book)

1-Loving Spirit, loving Spirit, you have chosen me to be,
You have drawn me to your wonder, you have set your sign on me.

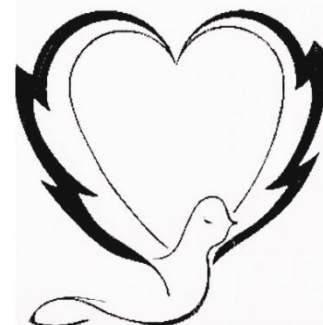
2-Like a mother you enfold me, hold my life within your own.
Feed me with your very body, form me of your flesh and bone.

3-Like a father you protect me, teach me the discerning eye.
Hoist me up upon your shoulder, let me see the world from high.

4-Friend and lover, in your closeness, I am known and held and blessed;
In your promise is my comfort, in your presence I may rest.

5-Loving Spirit, loving Spirit, you have chosen me to be.
You have drawn me to your wonder, you have set your sign on me.

*Do you have a
Loving Spirit?*



Litany of Faith

L: The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart;

P: The command of the Lord is clear, enlightening the eye.

L: Lord, you have the words of everlasting life.

P: The fear of the Lord is pure, enduring forever.

L: The ordinances of the Lord are true, all of them just.

P: Lord, you have the words of everlasting life.

L: They are more precious than gold, than a heap of purest gold;

P: Sweeter also than syrup, or honey from the comb.

A: Lord, you have the words of everlasting life, and for that, we praise you and give you thanks.

Prayers of the People and the Lord's Prayer

Cares Chorus: *I cast all my cares upon you. I lay all of my burdens down at your feet. And anytime, I don't know what to do, I cast all my cares upon you.*

The Call to Celebrate Our Gifts

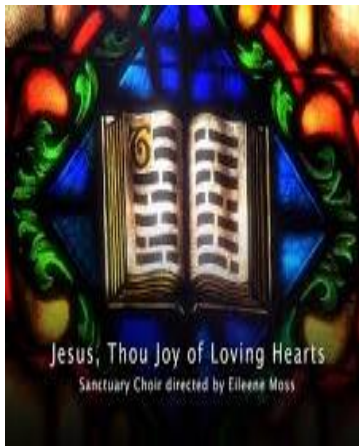
God has provided all that we need, and so we are called to return a portion of our blessings to God to be used in God's service. We so appreciate all that each of you shares for our church's ministry. May we all give sacrificially for God's glory.

Prayer of Dedication: We give our gifts mindful of the countless blessings that have come our way in the week gone by. In this time of worship, we have been awakened to the glory of your world through the beauty of music. Our minds have been challenged by the reading of scripture and our souls have been touched by the preaching of your Word. We have affirmed our faith and spoken honestly to you in times of prayer. In gratitude for all that has been given to us in our time together, we respond with generous hearts and hand as we dedicate our offering to you. Amen.

Going Out to Serve

Hymn # 510

Jesus, Thou Joy of Loving Hearts



*1-Jesus, thou joy of loving hearts, thou fount of life, thou light of all
From the best bliss that earth imparts, we turn, unfilled to heed thy call..*

*2-Thy truth unchanged hath ever stood; thou savest those that on thee call;
To them that seek thee thou art good, to them that find thee, all in all.*

*3-We taste thee, O thou living bread, and long to feast upon thee still;
We drink of thee, the fountainhead, and thirst our souls from thee to fill.*

*4-Our restless spirits yearn for thee, where'er our changeful lot is cast,
Glad when thy gracious smile we see, blest when our faith can hold thee fast.*

Blessing

L: As we go forth from this place, let us be mindful that the Cross of Christ calls us to rise to our best selves.

P: We will pick up the cross and follow faithfully in the footsteps of the One who has gone before us -

L: The One who **IS** – who **WAS** – and who forever **SHALL BE** – CHRIST THE LORD!

L: And may the blessings of God

Response

*He is Lord – He is Lord. He has risen from the dead, and he is Lord.
Every knee shall bow, every tongue confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord.*